

THE SWALLOW ROCK (CA-FRE-2485):  
AN OUTSTANDING PETROGLYPH SITE IN THE SOUTHERN DIABLO RANGE  
FRESNO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

INTRODUCE YOURSELF / ROLE WITH CDF

THIS ROLE HAS PROVIDED ME WITH A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO SEARCH FOR ROCK ART SITES IN SOME OF THE MOST REMOTE REGIONS OF CALIFORNIA, INCLUDING THE SOUTHERN DIABLO RANGE, THE LOCALITY DISCUSSED IN THIS PAPER.

I WAS CERTAINLY SURPRISED TO DISCOVER THAT THIS SCA PAPER WAS SCHEDULED FOR THE SATURDAY AFTERNOON SESSION ON "SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ARCHEOLOGY". I HAD NEVER THOUGHT OF THE COALINGA AREA TO BE PART OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BUT I SOON REALIZED THAT THERE WAS NO BETTER PLACE FOR ME TO PRESENT IT. CAREFUL STUDY OF A MAP OF CALIFORNIA REVEALED THAT IT IS INDEED LOCATED 95 MILES SOUTH OF THE MID-LINE OF OUR STATE, AND THEREFORE, COULD TECHNICALLY BE PLACED IN THE SOUTHERN ZONE.

AN EXPANDED VERSION OF THIS PAPER HAS BEEN SUBMITTED FOR PUBLICATION IN THE MUSEUM PAPER SERIES OF THE SAN DIEGO MUSEUM OF MAN. IT WILL APPEAR IN *ROCK ART PAPERS VOLUME 11*, EXPECTED OUT IN NOVEMBER, 1993. I HAVE BROUGHT A FEW ADVANCE COPIES WITH ME. AFTER MY PAPER, FEEL FREE TO TAKE ONE.

SLIDES NOW PLEASE

## **SLIDE #**

**1** COALINGA, A QUIET TOWN OF 7000 PEOPLE, IS LOCATED 60 MILES SOUTHWEST OF FRESNO AT THE WESTERN EDGE OF THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY. IT IS SITUATED AT THE JUNCTION OF 3 STREAMS AND NEAR THE FORMER LOCATION OF POSO CHANE, A MAJOR WINTER VILLAGE OF THE TACHI TRIBELET OF THE SOUTHERN VALLEY YOKUTS. THIS VILLAGE FORMERLY STOOD BESIDE A DEEP POOL OF WATER ("POSO") SURROUNDED BY A LUSH MARSHLAND. THE NATIVE TACHI PEOPLE LIVED HERE MOST OF THE YEAR ALTHOUGH THERE WERE REGULAR EXCURSIONS TO THE "HILL COUNTRY" TO HARVEST WILD PLANTS AS THEY RIPENED. RECENTLY, COALINGA HAS SERVED AS THE BASE CAMP FOR OUR ARCHEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS WITHIN THE SOUTHERN DIABLO RANGE, THE "HILL COUNTRY" VISITED BY TACHI YOKUTS. THIS REMOTE REGION OF CALIFORNIA HAS RECEIVED RELATIVELY LITTLE ARCHEOLOGICAL ATTENTION.

**2** ARCHEOLOGICAL TEST EXCAVATIONS AT "THE CORRAL SITE", A LATE-PREHISTORIC VILLAGE SITUATED IN LOS GATOS CREEK CANYON, INITIATED THE FORMATION OF A STUDY GROUP CALLED COALARG (COALINGA ARCHEOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP). COALARG'S PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE IS TO IDENTIFY, RECORD AND PROTECT THE ABUNDANT ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES FOUND IN THE AREA.

**3** SINCE ITS FORMATION IN 1987, COALARG HAS CONDUCTED NUMEROUS ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEYS WITHIN THE CANYONS, FOOTHILLS AND MOUNTAINS SURROUNDING COALINGA WITHIN A STUDY AREA MEASURING 60 MILES LONG AND 30 MILES WIDE. STUDY AREA BOUNDARIES EXTEND FROM THE KERN/FRESNO COUNTY LINE NORTH TO SHIELDS AVENUE (PANOCHÉ ROAD) AND FROM INTERSTATE HIGHWAY 5 WEST TO THE CREST OF THE COAST RANGE. TO DATE, COALARG HAS IDENTIFIED AND RECORDED OVER 100 ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES RANGING FROM MAJOR VILLAGES, TEMPORARY CAMPS, LITHIC WORKSHOPS, ROCKSHELTERS, QUARRIES, AND ROCK ART SITES. THE ROCK ART OF THE COALINGA BACKCOUNTRY, A PAPER DESCRIBING SEVEN ROCK ART SITES IN THE STUDY AREA, WAS PRESENTED AT THE 1992 SCA ANNUAL MEETING IN PASADENA, AND SUBSEQUENTLY PUBLISHED IN THE SAN DIEGO MUSEUM PAPER SERIES, VOLUME 7. THIS INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS REVEALED THE PRESENCE OF A COMPLEX ROCK ART ASSEMBLAGE WITH AT LEAST 2 DISTINCTIVE STYLES AND 3 ENIGMATIC SITES. SINCE THAT ROCK ART STUDY WAS COMPLETED, AN ADDITIONAL PETROGLYPH SITE HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AND RECORDED. KNOWN AS SWALLOW ROCK, THIS REMARKABLE SITE IS THE SUBJECT OF THIS PAPER.

**4** MAP OF ORIGINAL COALARG ROCK ART STUDY

**5** MAP OF PRESENT STUDY

**6** SWALLOW ROCK IS AN LARGE OUTCROPPING OF FRANCISCAN ASSEMBLAGE BLUESCHIST CONTAINING CHLORITE AND GLAUCOPHANE. IT IS SITUATED ON A BENCH JUST BELOW THE CREST (EAST) OF THE COAST RANGE, AT THE HEADWATERS OF JACALITOS CREEK, AT AN ELEVATION OF 2360 FEET. VEGETATION SURROUNDING THE SITE INCLUDES EXTENSIVE GRASSLAND AND OAK-WOODLAND COMMUNITIES, AND A CONIFEROUS FOREST COMPOSED OF DIGGER AND COULTER PINE EXISTS ON THE CREST OF THE NEARBY RIDGE WHICH SEPARATES FRESNO AND MONTEREY COUNTIES.

**7** SWALLOW ROCK IS SO-NAMED FOR THE PRESENCE OF NUMEROUS SWALLOW NESTS AND THE DISTINCTIVE WHITE SURFACES BELOW THEM APPARENTLY FORMED FROM SUSTAINED DEPOSITION OF SWALLOW GUANO OVER MANY YEARS. FORTUNATELY, THIS SWALLOW-NESTING ACTIVITY HAS NOT CAUSED ANY DAMAGE TO THE ROCK ART PANELS,

**8** MOST OF WHICH ARE LOCATED ON THE SMOOTH, HORIZONTAL SURFACES FOUND ON TOP OF THE OUTCROPPING, ALTHOUGH

**9** ONE PANEL, PANEL C, OCCURS ON A SLOPING, NEARLY-VERTICAL SURFACE ON THE WEST SIDE. ROCK ART IS MORE CONCENTRATED ON THE SOFTER, SMOOTHER, AND MORE EASILY CARVABLE PORTIONS OF THE ROCK, BUT ALSO OCCURS ON HARDER ROUGH SURFACES, ESPECIALLY ON THE TOP.

**10** SWALLOW ROCK IS LOCATED ON A BROAD TOPOGRAPHIC BENCH BETWEEN TWO SMALL STREAMS AND NEAR A LIVESTOCK POND. A THOROUGH SURVEY OF THE SURROUNDING AREA REVEALED NO OTHER CULTURAL MATERIALS SUCH AS MIDDEN, FLAKE SCATTERS, ARTIFACTS, OR HOUSEPITS IN DIRECT PHYSICAL ASSOCIATION TO THE SITE. A SMALL PREHISTORIC VILLAGE WAS FOUND A SHORT DISTANCE (500 METERS) NORTHWEST.

**11** SWALLOW ROCK IS 36 METERS LONG (N-S), 24 METERS WIDE (E-W), AND RANGES IN HEIGHT FROM NEARLY GROUND LEVEL ON THE WEST EDGE TO OVER 15 METERS TALL ON THE EAST ESCARPMENT. THE FORMATION HAS BROKEN INTO THREE MAIN SECTIONS, EACH CONTAINING AT LEAST ONE ROCK ART PANEL. EACH OF THE FOUR MAIN PANELS WERE CAREFULLY INSPECTED AND RECORDED WITH LINE DRAWINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS. THE RECORDING COULD BE CONDUCTED ONLY IN THE EARLY MORNING AND LATE EVENING DAYLIGHT HOURS AS OBLIQUE LIGHTING CONDITIONS ARE NECESSARY TO FULLY VIEW AND ACCURATELY RECORD THE ROCK ART PANELS.

**12** PANEL A CONTAINS NUMEROUS ABSTRACT CURVILINEAR MOTIFS, "CUP AND RING" MOTIFS, GROOVED OVALS, AND NUMEROUS ELEMENTS INVOLVING CIRCLES, AND EXTENSIVE PECKED AREAS.

13 PANEL B CONTAINS A SINGLE "CUP AND RING", AND A DOZEN OR MORE COMPLEX ABSTRACT CURVILINEAR FIGURES.

14 PANEL C IS AN EXTREMELY COMPLEX GROUPING WHICH CONTAINS A BEWILDERING ASSEMBLAGE OF OVERLAPPING ROCK ART STYLES. THE LOWER PORTION CONTAINS CONCENTRATIONS OF CLUSTERED, DEEPLY-INCISED LINES AND, BELOW THEM, FINE SCRATCHED LINES. THE UPPER RIGHT PORTION CONTAINS MANY MORE DEEPLY-GROOVED OVALS, WHILE THE CENTER CONTAINS GRIDDED-CIRCLES, GRIDDED-OVALS, A FEW CUPULES, MORE ABSTRACT CURVILINEAR DESIGNS, AND EXTENSIVELY-PECKED AREAS.

15 PANEL D CONTAINS ONLY THREE ABSTRACT CURVILINEAR MOTIFS.

USE POINTER - DON'T READ PAPER - AD LIB FROM SLIDES

- 16 THREE CUPULES
- 17 CLOSE-UP OF CUPULE
- 18 GROOVED OVAL
- 19 ANOTHER GROOVED-OVAL
- 20 AREAS WHERE OVAL CENTERS HAVE BEEN REMOVED
- 21 SOAPSTONE BOWL
- 22 SMALL SOAPSTONE BOWLS
- 23 SCHIST PENDANT (SHAFT-STRAIGHTENERS)
- 24 TWO "CUP-AND-RING" MOTIFS
- 25 CUP-AND-RING/CURVILINEAR MOTIF
- 26 TWO "CUP-AND-RING" MOTIFS
- 27 HOLE FROM REMOVAL OF CUP-AND-RING
- 28 SOAPSTONE RINGS
- 29 INCISED LINE MOTIFS
- 30 INCISED LINES/ POSSIBLE SUPERIMPOSITION
- 31 GRIDDED OVAL, CUP-AND-RINGS
- 32 DEEPLY-PECKED GROOVES/ABSTRACT FIGURES
- 33 ABSTRACT-CURVILINEAR DESIGNS
- 34 PECKED-FIGURES
- 35 PECKED FIGURES SHOWING RED HOST
- 36 CURVILINEAR MOTIF
- 37 PECKED FIGURE
- 38 PECKED CIRCLES, FIGURES

39 LARGE PECKED AREAS

40 PANEL C COMPLEXITY OF OVERLAPPING STYLES

### RETURN TO READING PAPER

41 IN AN ATTEMPT TO APPLY A STYLISTIC CLASSIFICATION ANALYSIS TO COMPLEX ROCK ART SITES OF THIS TYPE, IT IS USEFUL TO PLOT ITS LOCATION ON CLEWLOW'S STATEWIDE STYLE DISTRIBUTION MAP. THIS MAP REVEALS COALINGA TO BE SITUATED BETWEEN TWO KNOWN CONCENTRATIONS OF PICTOGRAPH SITES, IN THE SOUTHERN SIERRA NEVADA AND THE WESTERN FACE OF THE SOUTH COASTAL RANGE. IT IS MUCH MORE DISTANT FROM THE CLOSEST TWO KNOWN PETROGLYPH STYLE AREAS; THE CENTRAL SIERRA AND NORTH COAST STYLES.

42 IN SPITE OF THIS DISTANCE, THE ABSTRACT CURVILINEAR PETROGLYPHS AT SWALLOW ROCK ARE REMARKABLY SIMILAR TO THOSE FOUND AT A COMPLEX OF RELATED SITES WITHIN THE CENTRAL SIERRA NEVADA FOOTHILLS, IN PARTICULAR, TO THOSE CLUSTERED NEAR THE JUNCTION OF MARIPOSA AND MERCED COUNTIES SUCH AS THE BRUSHY CANYON SITE LOCATED ON THIS PROMINENT HILLTOP.

43 LIKE SWALLOW ROCK, THE BRUSHY CANYON PETROGLYPHS ARE CREATED BY DIRECT PECKING AND CONSIST OF AN BEWILDERING ARRAY OF ABSTRACT CURVILINEAR DESIGNS, MANY INVOLVING THE USE OF SIMPLE CIRCLES,

44 BUT ALSO INCLUDED ARE MORE COMPLEX ABSTRACT DESIGNS INCLUDING GRIDDED-OVALS, LINKED-CIRCLES, BISECTED-CIRCLES, RECTILINEAR MOTIFS AND CURVILINEAR MEANDERINGS.

45 THE DUTCHMAN CREEK SITE IS ANOTHER SIMILAR EXAMPLE.

46 LIKE SWALLOW ROCK, MANY PETROGLYPH PANELS HERE CONTAIN COMPLEX CURVILINEAR DESIGNS WITH MUCH SUPERIMPOSITION.

47 ALSO AT DUTCHMAN CREEK, THERE IS A SMALL PANEL OF DEEPLY INCISED LINES, QUITE RARE FOR SIERRAN SITES.

48 THE HORSESHOE BEND PETROGLYPHS (CAL-5) ON THE STANISLAUS RIVER IS ANOTHER SIERRAN SITE CONTAINING ROCK ART PANELS NEARLY IDENTICAL TO STYLE 1 PANELS AT SWALLOW ROCK. SIMILARITIES INCLUDE THE SUBJECT MATTER, METHOD OF MANUFACTURE, SUPERIMPOSITION, AND SELECTION OF A REDDISH-COLORED BACKGROUND.

49 ANOTHER SITE, "SLIME ROCK" (SBN-12), LOCATED 30 MILES NORTHWEST IN THE SAN BENITO RIVER DRAINAGE, IS REMARKABLY SIMILAR TO OTHER STYLES AT SWALLOW ROCK.

50 HERE, MANY DOZENS OF DEEPLY-GROOVED CIRCLES AND OVALS, CARVED INTO FRANCISCAN-ASSEMBLAGE BLUESCHIST, CAN BE SEEN.

51 LIKE SWALLOW ROCK, MANY OF THE PETROGLYPHS AT SLIME ROCK MAY REPRESENT QUARRY ACTIVITY. THIS SCHIST FORMATION IS ALSO QUITE SOFT AND EASILY CARVABLE.

52 THE "CUP-AND-RING" MOTIF IS ALSO COMMON,

53 AS ARE MANY EXAMPLES WHERE THE CENTERS OF GROOVED CIRCLES AND OVALS HAVE BEEN REMOVED IN AN APPARENT EFFORT TO QUARRY THE SOFT, SOAPSTONE-LIKE SCHIST BLANKS.

54 DEEPLY-INCISED LINES,

55 PECKED CIRCLES, AND CUPULES ARE ALSO QUITE COMMON AT SLIME ROCK.

56 THIS FIGURE AT SLIME ROCK AND SEVERAL OTHER EXAMPLES AT SWALLOW ROCK WERE FOUND TO EXHIBIT DISTINCTIVE SUPERIMPOSITION OF ROCK ART ELEMENTS. AN ANALYSIS OF THIS SUPERIMPOSITION HAS REVEALED CLUES CONCERNING THE RELATIVE AGES OF THE DIFFERENT STYLES. IT IS QUITE CLEAR THAT THE CUPULES AND DEEPLY-INCISED LINES IS TWO OF THE YOUNGEST STYLES. IN ALL OBSERVED CASES OF SUPERIMPOSITION, THESE WERE PLACED OVER EXISTING STYLES WHICH INCLUDED GROOVED CIRCLES AND OVALS. THESE ARE LIKELY TO BE CONSIDERABLY OLDER. THE OLDEST ROCK ART AT SWALLOW ROCK, WHICH IN FACT MAY DATE TO 2000 BC, ARE THE ABSTRACT CURVILINEAR MOTIFS DEFINED AS STYLE 1.

57 ANOTHER OBSERVATION AT SWALLOW ROCK, WHICH IN FACT MAY BE NOTHING MORE THAN A CURIOUS COINCIDENCE, IS THE VIEW AFFORDED TO THOSE STANDING ON ITS UPPER SURFACE. IN OUR PREVIOUS STUDY OF COALINGA ROCK ART, WE PRESENTED EVIDENCE WHICH SUGGESTED THAT AT LEAST THREE OF THE SEVEN STUDY SITES HAD SOME CONNECTION TO TWO DISTINCTIVE LANDMARKS IN THE AREA; JOAQUIN ROCKS, AND DONUT ROCK. THE SITES IN THE MOUNTAINS, SUCH AS BIRDWELL ROCK AND BLACK MOUNTAIN, EITHER CONTAINED PANELS THOUGHT TO BE RENDERINGS OF THE TWO ROCK FORMATIONS, OR WERE CURIOUSLY SITUATED SO AS TO BE IN FULL VIEW OF THEM. (USE POINTER)

58 PRIOR TO ITS COMPLETE DEMISE IN THE 1983 NUNEZ FAULT EARTHQUAKE, DONUT ROCK WAS A DISTINCTIVE LANDMARK ON A MAJOR TRENDING RIDGE. (USE POINTER)

59 IT CONSISTED OF A MAGNIFICENT ARCH OF METAMORPHIC SANDSTONE, AND SERVED AS A SOURCE OF WONDERMENT AND IMAGERY TO MODERN COALINGA RESIDENTS, AND NO DOUBT, TO ITS PREHISTORIC INHABITANTS AS WELL.

60 SUPPORTING THIS ASSUMPTION, WE FOUND THAT BOTH JOAQUIN ROCK AND DONUT ROCK WAS IN CLEAR VIEW FROM THE TOP OF SWALLOW ROCK, EVEN AT A DISTANCE OF OVER 20 MILES, THANKS TO A GAP IN ONE OF THE CLOSER RIDGES.

61 THROUGH ANOTHER GAP, THE TOWN OF COALINGA CAN BE SEEN, AND IN PROTOHISTORIC AND PREHISTORIC TIMES, THE TACHI WINTER VILLAGE OF POSO CHANE WOULD HAVE BEEN IN FULL VIEW. (USE POINTER)

62 OUR RESEARCH SUPPORTS THE CONCLUSION THAT THE SOUTHERN DIABLO RANGE IS A REGION CONTAINING A DIVERSE ASSEMBLAGE OF PREHISTORIC ROCK ART. SWALLOW ROCK IS AN EXTREMELY COMPLEX PETROGLYPH SITE CONTAINING 7 DISTINCTIVE SUPERIMPOSED STYLES. SOME STYLES ARE NEARLY IDENTICAL AND PROBABLY CULTURALLY RELATED TO PETROGLYPH TRADITIONS FOUND IN BOTH NORTH COAST AND CENTRAL SIERRA STYLE AREAS. THIS COMBINATION OF BOTH SIERRAN AND NORTH COAST TRAITS IS NOT SO FAR KNOWN TO OCCUR AT ANY OTHER ROCK ART SITE IN CALIFORNIA. ALSO, SWALLOW ROCK APPEARS TO BE THE ONLY SITE CONTAINING SIERRAN STYLE PETROGLYPHS LOCATED OUTSIDE OF THE SIERRA NEVADA. RELATIVE DATING AND STYLISTIC COMPARISONS ARE POSSIBLE VIA ABUNDANT SUPERIMPOSITION ON SEVERAL PANELS. BECAUSE OF THESE FACTORS, WE FEEL THAT SWALLOW ROCK SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED AS A SITE WITH THE HIGHEST ORDER OF ARCHEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

☺ 63 THANK YOU VERY MUCH